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MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION AUSTRALIANS LOOKED FOR WORK DURING THE YEAR: ABS

Just over 1.5 million Australians (9% of people aged 15 years and over) were out of work and looking for a job at some time during the year ending February 2007.

About 60% of these looked for work for fewer than 13 weeks, while about 7% looked for the whole 12 months without finding a job, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The average time spent looking for work was around 16 weeks, with men spending more time looking for work, on average, than women (17 weeks compared to 15 weeks). On average, people aged 55 years and over spent the most time looking for work (20 weeks), while those aged 15-19 years spent the least (13 weeks).

Of those 16.3 million Australians aged 15 years and over, just over two-thirds (11.1 million) had worked at some time during the year ending February 2007. Around 7.4 million of these worked for the whole year.

Men were more likely to have worked at some time during the year than women (75% compared to 62%).

Of the people who worked at some time during the year, almost two-thirds (65%) worked full time only, a quarter (25%) worked part time only, and the remaining 10% worked a combination of full and part time.

About 4.7 million people spent no time in the labour force during the year (i.e. neither working nor looking for work). When asked their main activity during the year:

- 39% reported 'retired or voluntarily inactive' (50% of men and 33% of women)
- 28% reported 'engaged in home duties or caring for children' (6% of men and 42% of women)
- 11% reported 'attending an educational institution' (14% of men and 8% of women)
- 7% reported a 'disability or handicap' (11% of men and 4% of women).

Media Note:

As this survey measures labour force activity over a 12 month period, the terms *worked* and *looked for work* are used rather than the more precisely defined terms *employed* and *unemployed*. It should also be noted that *worked* and *looked for work* are mutually exclusive categories. As such, someone defined as *looking for work* must also be without work.

Further information is in *Labour Force Experience, Australia, February 2007* (cat. no. 6206.0).

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